The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

WHOLE NO. 1726 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1944 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 34, NO. 19

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

What makes a man devote his life to the union cause? What attraction is there in a career which takes so much out of a person yet offers such insignificant rewards in the way of fame and fortune?

These reflections spring from the news of the sudden and shocking death of a friend who made the trade union movement his life's work, who accepted the philosophy of organized labor as his gospel—Joseph McDonagh.

McDonagh died as he had lived—in harness. He was attending a union conference in New York City and was reaching over to hand some papers to his colleague, Frank Fenton, when his heart stopped. He had no warning, no time or opportunity to utter a last word to those who will follow after him. Let his life speak as his parting message.

Joe was a little guy who went through life with his chin out. He was the kind of fighter who likes to pick out bigger and tougher opponents. He always had to battle against odds. Class rooms ended for him at an early age, but not his education. He served a thorough apprenticeship not only in his trade of electrician but as a soldier, a labor organizer, a legislative representative for his union in Congress and, finally, as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL Metal Trades Department.

Perhaps Joe McDonagh's rebellion against oppression, against stupid authority, began during his service in the Spanish-American War, when he saw action in Puerto Rico. Uncle Sam didn't treat his boys in uniform too well in that war. It was then that Joe learned to hate brass hats.

A Life-time Enlistment

Later, when peace came and Joe went back on the job, he discovered the same heartless attitude, the same cruel disregard for human life and human suffering, evinced by private employers toward their workers. What if there were industrial accidents? What if a mechanic fell from the rigging of a ship or had his fingers chopped off by a tool because proper safeguards were not provided? What if a man's energy and sap were burned out by too long hours on an intense job at too low pay? There were always others to take his place. Human life was cheap. It didn't pay to spend money to protect and conserve it, like machinery which represented a cash investment.

This was the type of economic cruelty against which Joe rebelled and against which he waged war through his union. This was the cause in which he volunteered to serve a life-time enlistment. And this was his victory—that by the time he left his home town of Brooklyn to assume a higher title and different duties in Washington, the electrical workers of his community had won the highest conditions that laboring men anywhere in the world had ever enjoyed.

In Washington, Joe was at first regarded as something of a rough diamond. As legislative representative for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, he came into contact with members of Congress and high-ranking Government officials who were well versed in the thousand different ways of the polite brush-off and painless double-cross. But they soon discovered that Joe had a disconcerting way of his own, a way of cutting through the double-talk and getting down to facts, a way of demanding yes-or-no answers and getting them.

During the last ten years of his life Joe McDonagh made many enemies in high places—and also many friends. The phonies feared him, but the honest politicians trusted and respected him. Joe was a steady, plodding, legislative worker—not necessarily brilliant but always reliable and on the job. The great gains in labor legislation which the workers of America have won can be credited at least in part to the hard work done by Joe and others like him.

A Practical Idealist

Joe McDonagh was nearing the age of sixty-six when he died. To a certain extent he liked to live in the past. He loved to recount dramatic incidents of long-forgotten labor conventions and battles against tough employers. We used to sit and listen to him by the hour on slow afternoons in Bill Hushing's office in the AFL Building.

If you didn't know better, you might get the impression from his casual conversation that Joe was a confirmed griper. He enjoyed sounding off on his pet hates, especially against the "professors" and "theorists" who abound in Washington. Joe would run into them frequently at meetings of various Government advisory boards on which he represented the AFL and some of their impractical theories with regard to labor regulations got into his hair. He had no patience with people who became overnight experts on matters with which they had never had any practical experience and he loathed red-tape. The brass hats in the Navy and War Departments did not overawe him nor did they delight him.

But, as we've tried to indicate before, the dominating, driving power behind Joe McDonagh was a more positive thing than mere impatience with stupid officialdom or even hate of oppression. He was that rare thing, a practical idealist—the kind of idealist who expresses himself in action rather than talk. He liked his fellow man and he worked for him. He loved his country and he served it. He clung to the independence that freedom gives a man and he was ready at all times to fight for it. He believed with all his being in the aims and philosophy of the American Federation of Labor and he lived and died for it.

This is just the kind of piece that would have embarrassed Joe to the utmost. He was the kind that appreciated a dig more than a compliment. But the workers of America owe Joe McDonagh more than a passing sigh. May he rest in peace.

Catholics In South Back Unions, Attack Anti-Labor Legislation

Memphis, Tenn.—The Catholic Committee of the South, comprising Church representatives from every Southern State, unanimously called upon the people of the South to intensify union organization and to repudiate such agencies as the Christian-American Association.

This association and other similar agencies, the Catholic group charged, "are working at the present time to destroy labor organization by emasculating protective legislation and enacting repressive regulations under cover of high-sounding names."

In another resolution, the Catholic Committee of the South summoned the clergy and laity of the South "to a more energetic and widespread program for the development of militant and capable leadership among the workers by promoting labor schools and direct aid to union organization, sound social legislation and joint meetings of the clergy, industry, agriculture and labor groups."

The convention of the Catholic Committee of the South recognized the fact that the type of mind which seeks to suppress religious minorities in the South through terroristic organizations like the Ku Klux Klan is the same as that which seeks to suppress the advancement of the trade union movement through the Christian-American organization.

The convention also recognized the danger of Communist infiltration into the labor movement when it pointed out that "militant, capable and ruthless politico-economic indoctrinators of the workers are preaching a way of life which rejects the principles of social justice and social charity and makes of religion at best a tool of the State."

The two labor resolutions, which were adopted unanimously were introduced by Father Jerome A. Drolet, of the New Orleans delegation.

SENATE GROUP VOTES TO CONTINUE OPA

Washington, D. C.—The Senate Banking Committee recommended an 18-month extension of the price control act which expires June 30. The vote came after it was learned that the Republican leadership in the House had decided to abandon the anti-subsidy fight and approve extension of the OPA with only one change—court review of its regulations.

The Senate Committee's action was in line with the recommendations of AFL President William Green, who warned in testifying before the group that proposals to weaken and undermine price control would result in inflation and widespread suffering by low-income groups.

GREEN URGES CONSERVATION OF FUEL AND POWER

President William Green has called upon the affiliated unions of the American Federation of Labor to launch a concerted drive for fuel and power conservation in industrial plants throughout the nation. Stressing that "greatly increased fuel demands of our armed forces and the necessity of meeting all of our industrial, commercial, and residential requirements prompts this move." Mr. Green called upon the membership of the unions concerned "to inaugurate a campaign among their membership to make fuel conservation effective in industry."

This program, in which over five thousand voluntary workers have already enlisted for active participation, is being carried out in cooperation with the Bureau of Mines, the Solid Fuels Administrator for War and the Petroleum Administrator for War.

U. S. Submits Plan To ILO Conference To Raise World-Wide Labor Standards

Five Steps Proposed To Improve Workers' Scale Of Living And Spread Security

Philadelphia.—The United States Government submitted to the international labor conference a plan of action for putting into effect the social objectives of the Atlantic Charter through measures designed to win improved labor standards, economic development and social security

Pressing for the adoption of five concrete steps to better the lot of the working man throughout the world, the United States plan called also for the promotion of a less restricted system of international trade, including freedom of the air, and for close scrutiny to make certain that the signatory governments abide by the rules.

The sweeping plan was placed before the newly constituted United Nations committee of the ILO by Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, and Senator Elbert D. Thomas, Government delegates. The plan is the product of six months of conferences by all interested Federal agencies and departments in Washington.

Through ratification of the plan each signatory government would, among other things, recognize its obligation "to foster, expanding production and employment on a sound basis, free from disruptive fluctuations, and to insure that workers and facilities shall not be allowed to be idle while the needs of large parts of the world remain unsatisfied."

The plan sets out these five points:

"1—Opportunity of useful and regular employment to all persons who want work, at fair wages or returns and under reasonable conditions.

"2—Establishment of minimum standards of employment to prevent exploitation of those workers, whether employed or self-employed, whose opportunities for high wage employment are limited.

"3—Provision for child welfare.

"4—Raising standards of living to provide adequate nutrition, housing, medical care and education.

"5—Provision for a regular flow of income to all those whose employment is interrupted by sickness or injury, by old age or by lack of employment opportunity."

VOICE FOR LABOR URGED AT PEACE CONFERENCE

Philadelphia.—Representation for labor at the peace conference was demanded by the United States Government in a resolution submitted to the ILO conference.

This objective, for which the American Federation of Labor has consistently fought, was supplemented by a demand that the ILO be consulted by other international organizations to be set up at the close of the war on all matters affecting the economic, social and political welfare of workers of the various countries.

World Labor Chiefs Join With AFL To Lift Standards of Common Man

Philadelphia.—Labor representatives from every free nation of the world pledged themselves to work for higher economic and social standards for the common man in the post-war period at a dinner given here by the American Federation of Labor.

The guests were drawn from the delegates and the officers of the current conference of the International Labor Organization and they were welcomed and entertained by the members of the AFL Executive Council.

AFL President William Green told the gathering:

"We stand with you in the determination to apply the letter and spirit of the Atlantic Charter: to extend the Four Freedoms throughout the world; to provide the people of our respective countries with full employment; and to make social security a reality when this war ends."

He emphasized that labor's support made the enactment of the Lend-Lease Act possible and he pointed out with facts and figures how the operation of the lend-lease program has helped the United Nations to beat back the enemy and make ultimate victory a certainty.

Secretary-Treasurer George Meany urged that the ILO "plan for a tomorrow of glorious opportunity." He pointed out the parallel between the present deliberations of the ILO here and the conferences of the nation's founding fathers in this city which resulted in the drafting of the American Constitution Their objectives, he insisted, were similar to the larger-scale objectives of the ILO.

Walter Nash, President of the ILO conference and Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, paid high tribute to the "magnificient contribution made by American labor to save the world from Fascism." No one else could have matched the achievements of American labor, he declared.

U. S. Senator Elbert D. Thomas, one of the Government's delegates to the ILO conference, said that the ILO is seeking the welfare of human beings everywhere rather than the advancement of any one State.

Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins declared that a sense of fellowship has grown and developed among the delegates who have come to the ILO meeting from every part of the world. She insisted that the ILO can give "living reality" to the purposes for which we are fighting this war. She extended high praise to Robert J. Watt, American workers' delegate to the ILO, for his able leadership at the conference. Mr. Watt, who is the AFL's international representative, presided at the dinner and introduced the guests and speakers.

BUILDING TRADES LAUDED IN RADIO BROADCAST

Washington, D. C.—Enthusiastic tributes to the great contribution program for new 100 octane gasoline plants toward completion in record time, were voiced on the April 30 "Labor For Victory" radio program by representatives of the War Production Board and the armed forces.

The broadcast, timed in conjunction with the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the development of the high-test fuel used by war planes, featured talks by WPB Vice Chairman Joseph Keenan, Lieut. Commander Henry (Swede) Larsen, one of the Navy's outstanding aviation heroes, and by Lloyd Mashburn, Secretary of the Los Angeles Building Trades Council of the AFL.

LONDON LABOR PARLEY SUDDENLY CALLED OFF

Philadelphia.—The world conference of labor proposed by the British Trades Union Congress and repudiated by the American Federation of Labor will not be held, it was officially announced here The meeting had been scheduled to open in London next month.

The AFL had opposed the conference on the ground that it would not be truly representative of the free trade union movements of the world, which were not consulted before the plans for the meeting were announced. British labor delegates to the ILO here said the transportation blockade, imposed because of the impending military drives by the United Nations, made the gathering impossible. It is understood, however, that interest in the proposed meeting turned lukewarm after the AFL repudiated it.

AFL ASKS FOR EXTENSION OF PRICE CONTROL ACT

"The Emergency Price Control Act, which is about to expire on June 30, 1944, should be extended for two years after the war to assure economic stability in the period labor regards as the 'danger zone' of the future," Mr. Lewis G. Hines, Legislative Representative of the American Federation of Labor, testified before the House Committee on Banking and Currency on May 4.

Mr. Hines headed a delegation of A. F. of L. witnesses who appeared before the Congressional Committee in support of the OPA Price Control Expansion. Mr. Charles E. Sands of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Alliance, along with other witnesses, reiterated the point stressed by Mr. Hines that the need for price control is especially pressing "because of the effects of increased living costs to those with static incomes, particularly the wives and families of the members of our armed forces who are depending upon Government allotments, as well as others whose income has and may be expected to remain static."

The AFL witnesses strongly condemned the recent report aimed against price control "by the Special Committee to Investigate Executive Agencies, headed by Congressman Howard Smith of Virginia, which has been received with the severest kind of condemnation by all fair-minded persons."

MORE WOMEN NEEDED TO WORK FOR VICTORY

Washington, D. C.—Employment of women in nearly every type of job—in industry, on the farm, in military services and in local activities—must be stepped up sharply before summer if war production demands and home front needs are to be met, the Office of War Information declared.

Women now hold one out of every three war jobs in the United States.

AFL Demands Post-War Jobs, Program For Human Rights

AFL Plan For Post-War Jobs

Philadelphia.—The AFL Executive Council's recommendations for immediate action to provide post-war employment and to stimulate peace-time production follow:

The Executive Council believes that the future welfare of America calls for immediate action to provide post-war jobs for the millions of workers who will be released from war industries and the additional millions who will be discharged from the armed forces when the fighting ends.

Obviously the most critical period will be the interval between the abrupt cancellation of war contracts and the reconversion of industry to production for peace-time needs.

It behooves the nation to prepare an emergency work program that can be put into operation during this in-between period to prevent widespread suffering and to cushion the shock of a sudden industrial letdown.

The Executive Council is convinced that one of the best possible expedients would be the initiation of a nation-wide housing and public works construction program

The construction industry requires no elaborate reconversion. It is all set to go. The need for new housing in practiially every American city and community is acute and has been aggravated by the virtual paralysis of private construction during the war. Similarly, the need for new bridges, schools, airports, roads, transit facilities and other useful and necessary public works is clearly apparent.

It should also be noted that the initiation of a broad housing and public works construction program would give employment directly to perhaps two million building trades workers and indirectly to many additional millions of workers engaged in the manufacture of building supplies and home equipment. Thus the new demands created by large-scale construction would galvanize into action plants and factories throughout the nation engaged in a wide variety of productive enterprises.

To avoid fatal delays in getting such a construction and production drive started, the Executive Council recommends:

1—Immediate conferences, with industry, labor and Government representatives participating, to prepare the scope of the projected program, its timing, financing and encouragement.

2—Agreement on how the necessary land may be acquired and the vast flow of materials provided.

3—Establishment of lines of demarcation by which the Federal Government will allow private industry and private financing a clear field for launching and carrying out the home construction program.

4—Acceptance by State and local governments, whose credit has been strengthened during the war period, of the responsibility for financing the projected public works program in so far as possible without aid from the Federal Government, which has been forced to carry the heavy burden of financing the war effort.

5—Formulation of clear and definite understandings between management and labor in the construction industry to assure satisfactory and cooperative relations during the construction drive.

No Labor Conscription Needed

Philadelphia.—Text of the resolution adopted by the AFL Executive Council on the manpower problem follows:

The Executive Council, after careful consideration of the nation's manpower problems, has come to the conclusion that the American Federation of Labor's consistent opposition to labor conscription and all other compulsory methods has been fully justified by events.

Operating under a system of voluntary manpower controls, with a high measure of cooperation from labor and industry, the nation has succeeded in reaching the highest levels of war production ever attained by any country in the world and in maintaining all essential civilian services at the same time. This has been accomplished despite the heavy drain imposed upon the nation's manpower resources by the demands of the armed forces

The record proves that such manpower shortages as have developed were only local and temporary in character. The unchallengeable fact is that production in vital war industries has not suffered for lack of workers.

The Executive Council is fully confident that the American people can complete the job of winning the war, both on the production and fighting fronts, if the present manpower setup is permitted to function without interference by new and impractical experiments.

One by one the arguments for adoption of national service legislation have been demolished. It is now conceded that such legislation would not prevent strikes. Those engaged in the actual work of production in factory and farm are united in the conclusion that such legislation would not increase output but might impede it.

The preponderantly unfavorable response of the American people to proposals for national service legislation is proof enough that enactment of this measure would damage morale instead of uplifting it.

The Executive Council believes that the worst injury to public morale on the home front has been wrought by military authorities who, in the eagerness to secure enactment of national service legislation, have issued a long series of conflicting, confusing and upsetting statements and regulations.

In particular, the Executive Council regards the apparently haphazard and contradictory policies announced from week to week and month to month on inductions into the armed forces as indefensible from any point of view.

To assure most effective use of the nation's manpower resources and to restore public confidence, the Executive Council recommends:

1—That the persistent proposals for national legislation which is opposed by labor, by management, by agriculture, by a majority in Congress and by the overwhelming mass of the American people, be dropped.

2—That the military authorities and the Selective Service System adopt a sound and consistent policy with regard to future recruitment for the armed forces and stick by it.

3—That special care be taken not to siphon off irreplaceable men from war industry into the armed forces lest production be crippled.

4—That official public announcements as to changing requirements of the various phases of the manpower henceforth be made by a single responsible authority and only after such changes have actually been decided upon.

The Executive Council is convinced that in the months ahead labor surpluses, rather than shortages, will be our chief problem. Every evidence at hand indicates that war production for the most part, has passed its peak and is entering a declining stage. From now on we may expect that the trend toward cutbacks of production will be accelerated Therefore, we strongly urge Congress to set up Government machinery for reconversion to peace production as soon as possible so that the decline in war production can be integrated with expansion of output of badly needed civilian goods.

Support Bill For Human Rights

Philadelphia.—Partial text of the AFL Executive Council's resolution demanding that Congress adopt post-war protections for human beings as well as property follows:

The Executive Council calls upon the leaders of Congress to stay in session until a comprehensive program to provide for human needs during the demobilization period and to stimulate full production and full employment in the post-war years is finally adopted.

We regard the George-Murray bill as a limited first step toward the enactment of a complete and well-balanced plan for the protection of the nation's post-war economy. By itself and without further action it falls far short of the mark. It must be supplemented by prompt passage of the Kilgore bill.

This measure proposes to set up machinery in the office of War Mobilization to meet the major problems of labor and industry in the reconversion process. Democratic representation of the functional groups in the nation's economic life in the policy-making setup is guaranteed in this bill. Among the important fields the measure covers are disposal of surplus war materials; coordination of war contract cancellations with the revival of peace-time industry; and methods of meeting unemployment problems, including interim pay for demobilized servicemen and disemployed civilian workers.

Of course, enactment of this bill will not, in and of itself, solve all the nation's post-war economic problems. But it provides the machinery through which labor and industry and agriculture and the Government can work together effectively to prevent an economic collapse and spare the American people needless suffering.

Congress cannot evade, delay or ignore its responsibility to give the nation this opportunity to work out its own economic salvation in a democratic way under a free enterprise system.

Council Also Hits Draft of Labor, Upholds WLB In Test Case

Philadelphia.—Acting swiftly and boldly on the nation's pressing economic problems, the AFL Executive Council completed the first week of its quarterly, Spring session with these outstanding results:

1—It demanded prompt action to create a reservoir of immediate post-war jobs through the launching of a vast housing and public works construction program the moment the fighting ends.

2—It condemned all proposals for labor conscription in war production and called upon the military authorities to restore the confidence of the American people by developing a sound and consistent policy on inductions into the armed forces.

3—It urged the leaders of Congress to stay in session until enactment of a comprehensive program to provide for human needs in the post-war period as well as the protection of property rights.

4—It upheld the authority of the National War Labor Board to deal with all labor disputes by supporting its position in the Montgomery-Ward case and by warning employers that "this is no time for them to strike against the war effort or against the nation."

5—It reaffirmed its previous declaration with regard to the application for re-affiliation of the United Mine Workers Union, holding that this organization can return to the Federation with the jurisdiction it enjoyed when it left, but rejecting John L. Lewis' demand for the postponement of decision on jurisdictional conflicts until after re-affiliation.

The decision of the Executive Council in the UMW case amounted to a flat rejection of Lewis' terms. Informed by the press of the Council's action, Mr. Lewis announced his withdrawal of the application for re-affiliation.

The Council also acted on two other charter applications. It rejected a request for a charter submitted by a group representing mailers who have seceded from the International Typographical Union. This was interpreted as a friendly gesture to the ITU whose 80,000 members are about to vote in referendum soon on a proposal for re-affiliation with the AFL.

The second charter application was made in behalf of a group of twenty-five Federal labor unions in the fabricated metals trade. The Executive Council directed President Green and Secretary-Treasurer Meany to iron out any jurisdictional conflicts that may exist between these unions and other AFL affiliates, and when these matters are straightened out to grant the charter.

A great deal of interest was manifested in the Council's action in the Montgomery-Ward case because of the wide publicity attending the Government's seizure of the company's property and because of the fact that a CIO union was involved.

Disregarding the latter consideration, the Council declared:

"The important point is that if one employer is permitted to flout the authority of the War Labor Board and disregard its decisions with impunity on the flimsy pretext that he is not directly concerned with the war effort, it will be impossible in the future to obtain full compliance with the Board's decisions from other employers who are admittedly engaged in war production.

"The Executive Council several days ago issued a pre-invasion warning to the workers of America, emphasizing that this is no time to strike. We now warn the leaders of American industry that this is no time for them to strike against the war effort or against the nation."

The Council spent considerable time in reviewing the status of litigation challenging the constitutionality of anti-labor legislation adopted in a dozen states Joseph A. Padway, AFL counsel, reported that for the most part state authorities are holding up enforcement of these laws pending final determiniation by the courts of their validity. Mr. Padway also conferred with the Council on the forms which will be sent out by the Bureau of Internal Revenue for financial statements by all union organizations, required under the new tax law.

AFL RELIEF FUND WILL AID HITLER'S VICTIMS

New York City.—Refugees who succeeded in reaching Palestine before the British banned further Jewish immigration on March 31 will be among those to benefit from the Palestinian relief projects recently set up by American organized labor through the National War Fund, according to Abraham Bluestein, executive director of the Labor League for Human Rights, relief arm of the AFL.

The League's contribution will provide medical aid for war workers, and improve existing facilities for their care at sanitoria in Haifa, Safeth, Jerusalem, and other Palestinian cities.

In addition, medical aid will be furnished to the families of refugees, servicemen, volunteer defense workers, and low-paid workers, both Jewish and Arab, engaged in various military projects.